

PRESS RELEASE

THE TRAVIS LETTER LEAVES THE ALAMO

BOLD 13-DAY EXHIBIT HAS LASTING FINANCIAL, EMOTIONAL IMPACT

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THE ALAMO — Once again, the William B. Travis "Victory or Death" letter is leaving the Alamo. Unlike its first journey 177 years ago when the letter was meant to reach all Texans, the letter is now leaving public view for the confines of a guarded vault.

As it is placed on the big blue truck and once again flanked by state troopers on its trip to Austin, the Travis Letter returns to an uncertain future. Yet the letter's impact on the Alamo and the public consciousness will be lasting.

The 13-day stay at the Alamo inspired tens of thousands of visitors and produced a financial windfall for the iconic former mission.

While figures from the final day of public viewing are not yet available, more than 23,000 dedicated visitors waited in long lines and braved biting cold and blazing sun to see the famous, faded letter in a darkened Alamo church. Many were moved to tears by the impassioned, patriotic plea for help from the 26-year-old Alamo commander.

His call for aid in 1836 rallied many to the cause of Texas, but only 32 brave men from Gonzales could make it to the Alamo before the fort was taken by Santa Anna's troops. This year, the letter rallied more than 1,000 Texans to join the flagging "Allies of the Alamo" membership program, raising a total of \$69,010 in just two weeks to help preserve and protect the Shrine of Texas Liberty for future generations.

The celebratory windfall continued in the newly renovated Alamo Gift Shop, which carried a line of merchandise commemorating the Travis Letter event. Postcards, a commemorative book, T-shirts, cookies emblazoned with "I Saw The Letter" and even a Travis Letter written on a 2-pound bar of Belgian chocolate helped propel sales at the store to a record \$291,951 for the two-week period.

The Alamo relies on this funding almost exclusively for daily operations and history education programs.

Over the last few weeks, opinions about what should happen next with the letter were as numerous as those who waited in line. Some said it should stay at the Alamo permanently, while others believed seeing the letter once in a lifetime is good enough. The answer to this issue rests with legislators, who ultimately have the power to decide the letter's fate. For now, the letter has once again served its purpose.

"The letter worked once again, rallying Texans everywhere to the Alamo," said Texas Land Commissioner Jerry Patterson. "I am honored to have played a small role in this letter's history by returning it to the Alamo to inspire new generations with its message of defiance to tyranny and love of freedom."

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